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STATINTL

U.S. Task Force Didn't Frighten India

By Jack Anderson

The dramatic appearance of a U.S. naval task force in the Bay of Bengal on the eve of the Pakistani surrender, it now appears, didn't intimidate India at all but merely strengthened her ties with Russia.

In New Delhi, Soviet Ambassador Nikolai M. Pegov gave India secret assurances that "a Soviet fleet is now in the Indian Ocean and . . . will not allow the Seventh Fleet to intervene."

He also promised, in case of a Chinese attack across the Himalayas, that Russia "would open a diversionary action in Sinkiang." In short, he promised Soviet military action against both the U.S. and China if they intervened on Pakistan's side.

The fascinating story of big-power intrigue during the Indian-Pakistan fighting is told in secret diplomatic dispatches and intelligence reports.

It was precisely this sort of secret maneuvering that got the U.S. deeply embroiled in the Vietnam war before the American people realized what was going on. We believe it is in the public interest, therefore, to publish excerpts from the secret documents.

In earlier columns, we told how presidential adviser Henry Kissinger assured reporters the U.S. wasn't anti-India at the same time he was instructing government policy-

makers to take steps against India.

"The President does not want to be evenhanded," Kissinger emphasized at their secret strategy sessions. "The President believes India is the attacker."

Wrong Side

The State Department's professionals argued that, morally, the U.S. should be on the side of the Bengalis, who wanted their independence from Pakistan. The experts also warned that President Nixon's pro-Pakistan policy would only drive India into Soviet arms.

Kissinger gruffly disputed this, saying of India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi: "The lady is cold blooded and tough and will not turn India into a Soviet satellite merely because of pique."

Heeding Kissinger and disregarding the professional advice, Mr. Nixon took a tough stand at the United Nations against India and ordered the Seventh Fleet to send a task force into Indian waters.

This was definitely intended as a "show of force," although the flotilla had the additional mission of evacuating stranded Americans from embattled Dacca if the need arose.

Plans were made, meanwhile, to arrange provocative leaks in such places as Djakarta, Manila and Singapore of the task force's approach. By the time the ships had assembled in the Malacca Strait,

both the Indians and Soviets were well aware they were on the way.

This merely served to bring India and Russia closer together. A secret intelligence report, giving a "reliable" account of Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Pegov's conversations with Indian officials, declared:

"Pegov stated that Pakistan is trying to draw both the United States and China into the present conflict. The Soviet Union, however, does not believe that either country will intervene."

"According to Pegov, the movement of the U.S. Seventh Fleet is an effort by the U.S. to bully India, to discourage it from striking against West Pakistan and at the same time to boost the morale of the Pakistani forces."

"Pegov noted that a Soviet fleet is now in the Indian Ocean and that the Soviet Union will not allow the Seventh Fleet to intervene."

Soviet Threat

"If China should decide to intervene," said Pegov, "the Soviet Union would open a diversionary action in Sinkiang. Pegov also commented that after Dacca is liberated and the Bangladesh government is installed, both the U.S. and China will be unable to act and will change their current attitude toward the crisis."

Another intelligence report, giving the secret details of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov's mission to

India, indicates there had been some Soviet impatience over the pace of the Indian blitzkrieg.

Kuznetsov, after his arrival in New Delhi on Dec. 12, told Indian officials that the Kremlin was "impatient with the Indian armed forces for their inability to liberate Bangladesh within the ten-day time frame mentioned before the outbreak of hostilities."

Kuznetsov pointed out, according to the secret report, that Soviet opposition to a cease-fire "becomes more untenable the longer the war goes on in the east."

"While Kuznetsov said the Soviet Union will continue to use its veto to stall any efforts to bring about a cease-fire for the present, he stressed the importance of quick and decisive Indian action in liberating Bangladesh in the shortest time possible."

"Kuznetsov delayed his scheduled return to Moscow because he is awaiting special instructions from Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, regarding India's request that the Soviet Union sign a defense agreement with the Bangladesh government after Soviet recognition of Bangladesh."

"According to Kuznetsov, Brezhnev was not in Moscow when Kuznetsov sent him the request for guidance."

The American people, meanwhile, are entitled to straight talk from their leaders.

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Diplomats as Spies

Washington, with the welcome mat out for the Peking Chinese, now on American soil for the first time in over 20 years, has been somewhat taken aback to learn that the leader of the advance party is one of China's top spies.

He is Kao Liang, who with five other officials arrived in New York last Monday and paid his first visit to the United Nations Tuesday. Now our own intelligence people, presumably the CIA, have caused surprise and concern by letting it be known that Kao has had the following assignments:

Under the "cover" of being chief African correspondent for the New China News Agency, he traveled extensively through Africa in the early 1960s as Peking established itself on the continent.

He was the prime mover in the pro-Peking uprising in Zanzibar in 1964, passing out arms and money to the insurgents. When it was over, the local agent for Kao's news agency emerged as foreign minister of the new government.

Nobody should be surprised. The Russians regularly use members of their diplomatic missions as spies. One such, recently revealed by the CIA, was Vladimir Pavlichenko, director of external information of the United Nations Public Information Office. Pavlichenko, said the CIA, is a "veteran officer" of the KGB, the Soviet intelligence agency.

Furthermore, it must be presumed that our own intelligence agencies take advantage of the cloak of diplomatic immunity in foreign countries. Just about everybody else does it, so why shouldn't we?

On the other hand, there is no United Nations headquarters in China to which we could send a mission including spies. It is one more reason for establishing diplomatic relations, so we can get our intelligence people in Peking.